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A BOOK OF
VERSE

CHARLES A. LANGWORTHY



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A Book of
V E R S E

By
CHARLES A. LANGWORTHY



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DEDICATION

To him whose memory was filled
With lines for each occasion,
In whom harsh commerce had not stilled
The tones of rhymed persuasion;

To her whose tasks, though never done,
Sweet songs alleviated —
Kind parents of a worthless son —
This book is dedicated.

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PREFACE

The following poems owe their existence to various whims of my own. The responsibility for their publication, however, rests squarely upon the shoulders of the Contributor's Club of Albion College, and is especially chargeable to Professor Phil H. Hembdt. He is kind enough to believe that friends of the college must perforce be friends of one of its aspiring verse-makers.

Should this book come into the hands of anyone outside the college circle, such a person should feel no sort of obligation to choke himself with this particular dust from the hoof of Pegasus.

On the other hand, it should be said that these are not, for the most part, college poems. Some of them have been written recently; many of them were written before I came to college; some, I am afraid, before I entered high school. Could I have flattered myself with the certainty of improvement with growing experience, I might have arranged them in some approximation of chronological sequence. As it is, they are thrown together, not without any principle of arrangement, I trust, but not at all in the order of composition.

I hope it is quite needless to add that a book of poems should not be regarded as a sort of scrap-book

of autobiographical revelations. A short poem, to be sure, is usually the expression of a situation and its appropriate mood. One can hardly express that which is altogether foreign to him; but the hunger for otherness and universality may lead the writer, just as it leads the reader, into moods and situations which are not mere cross-sections of his own personal experience.

But since prefaces are never read, I will desist from further explanations, and leave the hypothetical reader to shift for himself.

C. A. L.

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A Book of Verse

OUR PILOT OF THE DEEP*

They called to us, the pilots of the shore,
 "Beware the outer deep!
Follow the sea-paths men have sailed before,
The sheltered routes, the safe and charted ways,
Among the islands and the land-locked bays
 Where the wild waters sleep."

But we replied, "We feel the outbound breeze,
 The outward-setting tide;
The far horizons lure us from the leas.
Oh, here we can not sail! The grating shoals
Drag at the keel; ever the good ship rolls
 Idly from side to side.

"If we were meant to warp upon the sand,
 Why were we furnished thus?
Sails and not anchors did the builder's hand
Equip us with, keels for the deep-sea swell."
Grimly the pilots answered, "Then, farewell —
 Farewell to God and us."

*In memory of Professor Fredric Coe Demorest.

So we sailed out, some reckless, some in tears,
 Out where the soul finds room:
Out to the deep-sea joys and deep-sea fears
Where paths are made, not followed, ever glad
For keel depth and for sail room, and yet sad,
 Sad on a sea of doom.

And then one hailed us with a hearty voice
 Across the waters broad.
We listened wondering for he cried, "Rejoice!
'Tis God that urges to the outer seas,
God's was the outward tide, the outbound breeze
 The very breath of God."

One morn his sail had vanished, and no more
 We heard his hearty hail.
Lost, as so many ships were lost before:
As all are lost, both those that dare the deep,
And those that round the coward coasts do creep
 With charts and shortened sail.

We mourn our deep-sea pilot; we have lost
 His father-love and care.
The misty seas we traverse he has crossed.
And yet we must not mourn him over-much,
For helms of wandering ships may feel his touch
 On wide seas other-where.

INFIDELITY

I walked at sunset by the river's marge
To see, upon the farther side, the light
Gleam and rebound from many a polished shaft
Of stone memorial. Behind me lay,
Beyond a few fenced fields and knots of trees,
The little city with its spires and stacks
Against the glowing west.

Deliberately
The sun withdrew; all softened into dusk.
And now the tombs which had so proudly gleamed
Showed gray and cold through rising river-mists,
While overhead the stars were gathering
To hold their silent converse till the dawn.

And then I turned, and walked the winding road
Back to the city streets. But ere I reached
The avenue by lighted arches spanned,
Passed many a squalid hut, met many a man
Whose eyes shot pain and hunger into mine.

IN THE COOL OF THE DAY

I walked with God in the cool of the day
Under the shade of the trees,
When the sun was low on his circling way
And sweet was the breath of the breeze.

And I talked with God in the forest shade
Which the long beams slanted through,
As a maid might talk to a listening maid
Or a man might talk to you.

And ever his speech was open and clear;
But sometimes I could not tell
What his answers meant, though sweet on my ear
His low, grave accents fell.

And sometimes he answered not at all,
As though he had never heard;
Yet his silence was gracious as was the fall
Of each slow, simple word.

And the words most clear, the words most **free**,
Oh, I cannot recall what they were,
For I lost the answers he gave to me
In my heed of the answerer.

Yet many replies he granted me there
In the cool shade under the trees,
In a fair, frank manner that asked no prayer
And sought no bend of the knees.

Till I asked him the meaning of life and light
In the clutch of the dark and decay;
Of the old, old tangle of wrong and right,
And the debt that the soul must pay —

As the shadow and sheen on the round of a limb,
Was it thus with the evil and good?
And God kept silence, the day grew dim;
Yet God was there in the wood.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

Peace throughout all that pagan world,
No flight of spear, no thrust of sword,
The eagle banners all were furled,
Three continents owned Augustus lord.

Peace in the solemn sky that bent
Above the babe at Bethlehem,
The star-bespangled firmament
His only diadem.

And now when emperor and king
Bow down before the manger-born,
And temple bells his praises ring
In western worlds at eve and morn,

Loud war blasphemes on sea and shore
Nor spares the very skies above,
While Christians, red with Christian gore,
Invoke their God of love.

LORD GOD OF ALL

Lord God, Lord God, oh, long enough
Men have called thee God of the Jew;
The God of the Spanish, German, French,
The God of the Russian, too;
The special God of English crime,
God of American greed,
God of Nile's mud or of Ganges' slime,
Or of any single breed.
From northern ice and torrid sun,
Lord God, at last we call
To the God of a world, of a universe —
Lord God, Lord God of All.

The Moslem spurred o'er the burning waste
To slay God's foe and gain

His harem-houri of the soul
Where lusts immortal reign.
The Christian died on Syrian sand
Happy if he had killed
One devil's imp with his failing brand
Where his God's own blood was spilled.
In the name of his God the Catholic burned
The heretic at the stake,
And Calvin burned the unelect
His God's hot wrath to slake.

The Spaniards launched their floating hell
And prayed their God to steer;
The English put their trust in God —
Their God — and felt no fear.
The North called God to aid the right;
The South, to save the wronged:
Hot prayers through the smoke of every fight
To the God of a section thronged;
For his Emperor God died the Japanese;
And the low-browed Russian fell
Dreaming he served the God of the Czar,
Who was God of the world as well.

Lord God, Lord God, shall we ever cease
Making stones of the toiler's bread
To cram an iron mouth of hell
And thunder his brother dead?
Will the time ever come when the mother may know
When her arms round her new-born are thrown

That no bursting bomb into fragments may blow
This tender flesh of her own?
Lord God, Lord God, from the smoke of wars
We waged at some fool's call,
Lord God we yearn, Lord God we turn
Toward the God who is God of All!

WHILE NATIONS WAR

Here the tall stacks belch out their sooty waste,
And all the ground is black and gritty-gray;
Here dingy freight cars smirch the glaring day,
And scrap-heap piles with grease and rust defaced.

Here, huddled close and ranged in rigid rows
With ugly sameness, stand the houses where
The moilers in the neighboring mills repair
At dusty dusk when the harsh whistle blows.

And here their wives and babes, through crusted panes
And cobwebbed screens, behold the unlovely scene
Of slag and grime devoid of living green —
Where ghastly greed the face of God disdains.

Here glaring day succeeds to glaring day,
Rolling in sullen rhythm, grinding out
Their pitiful by-products, wistful doubt,
Sullen despair, crushed youth, horizons gray.

No change, no respite, save night hours swilled
Within the dens of drink or dives of shame,
Where their gray lives find color in the flame
Of self-consuming fires, soon quenched and chilled.

And all the while, afar on trampled fields,
Hot, quivering flesh is kneaded into clay,
And dupes and drudges in one hellish day
Destroy what a year of toil would yield;

Meaning that dupes and drudges, yet unborn,
Shall lead gray lives to pleasure knaves and fools,
While ragged waifs in patriotic schools
Yearn for the call of the thrilling bugle-horn.

THE HEART'S REMONSTRANCE

Bow down, bow down your foreheads to the dust!
And bow your pride—O put no further trust
 In your weak hands and wills!
Lo, you have built upon the shifting sands,
Fallen are the works of your unheedful hands,
Swept like cloud-castles from the morning hills.

Bow down, bow down! The God whom you forgot
Fans the fierce fire within your hearts, and hot
 Your senseless anger is

As was the zeal wherewith you built, the pride
Of foolish trust which made you all deride
The heart's high creed that might have hindered this.

Bow down, bow down! You trusted in your might,
You had no faith in mercy, in the right;
 You built an iron wall
About your shrines, because you thought the power
Of greed and hate must prop or else the tower
 Of truth would fall.

Bow down, bow down! For lo, these many years
You have simpered of love, shed sentimental tears
 For the world's sin and woe,
And all the while your deeds have sung the praise
Of Mammon and Might, and feverish nights and days
 Have seen your idols grow.

Bow down, bow down! Your idols of iron and brass
Have drunk men's blood in the making, and now, alas,
 They drink your brothers' blood.
With the crushed lives of toilers what have you built
But monsters to belch forth your hearts' red guilt,
 And swell death's bitter flood.

Bow down, bow down! Trust not your flaunting flags,
Your rolling drums, your cannon-crested crags,
 Your steaming isles of steel.

The sword smites back, the slayer becomes the slain,
You deal out death, and death is your only gain,
What you inflict you feel.

Bow down, bow down! Bow till your brains are cool,
Bow till the head has gone to the heart to school—
And then, arise, arise!
Be bold, be strong, trust your word and your deed,
Dare to follow the Christ and act his creed
Under the open skies.

SATURDAY NIGHT

Saturday night and rain, the main street crowded full:
Dripping, dodging shoppers, bums in every shelter,
Carriages with covers up. Farmer women pull
Nervously upon the lines while the autos skelter.

I hurry across a slippery pave and through an alley-
way,
Reach a residential street. Ah, the solemn dripping
Through gigantic glooms above (common trees by
day)
Only here and there a beam through the shadows
slipping.

All daylight discrepancies of color and of shape —
Tangled curves and angles, shabby grays and glaring
Independent yellows — now no longer gape,
No competing uglinesses at each other staring.

Hollow rumbles underfoot, I reach the little stream.
Shy and sad it takes its way, a stranger through the
city,
Seems to loiter in the shade and hurry through the
gleam,
Has no greeting for the crowd but hums a woodland
ditty.

Lonesome, lonesome is the note you murmur on your
course,
Little river from the dark into the darkness going,
Lonesome not for brawling brooks, intruders at your
source,
Lonesome for the tribute streams down their deep
channels flowing.

Sick am I of shallow streets as you of shallow brooks;
Longing not for cheerful friends, oh, rather I am
yearning
For companionship of souls as quiet as my books,
Not muffling up the ears with noise but to the silence
turning.

And ah, beyond the tribute streams you sense the
solemn sea,
Mighty mother: ever resting in unceasing motion,
In whose depths you lose yourself as in eternity,
Lose yourself, but in that loss find yourself the ocean.

IN A LIBRARY

With awe and shame I walk the padded aisles
Among the crowded stacks of waiting books
Which seem to throw from all their narrow nooks
Reproachful glances and ironic smiles;
As though they sighed, "Another fool defiles
Our sacred prison and with peering looks,
Sure of his power of smug selection, brooks
The awful largess of our treasure piles."
But no, ah no! I come not now to take
Out of its cell one of your multitude,
Some thirst of curiosity to slake
Or, like a mouse, to nibble costly food;
Rather the throbbing streets I now forsake
Here in your proud, tense silences to brood.

THE LEAF

(From the French)

“Poor, dry leaf on the ground,
Whither, ah whither, art bound?” —
“How should I know? For the oak
Bowed to the storm and broke;
And thus of my one support
Deprived, I am driven forth.
Winds of the west, of the north,
Whirl me about in their sport,
Driven from forest to glade,
Driven from mountain to vale.
Nor pity nor fear has the gale
For me. I go where goes
Everything — where the leaf of the rose
And the leaf of the laurel are laid.”

THE SIMPLE LIFE

(From Horace)

I, the bard, what do I seek
From new-shrined Apollo now?
What does this fresh wine bespeak
That I pour? 'Tis not, I vow,

For Sardinia's grain-grown fields,
Nor Calabria's herds that graze,
Sleepy-sleek through sultry days,
Gold or ivory India yields.

No: nor for the meadows sweet,
Where the Liris, silent stream,
Loiters with reluctant feet,
Loath to leave his pleasant dream.

Let them prune the vine to whom
Fortune gives the vineyard's care.
For reward — that vintage rare
Some rich merchant, I presume,

Will drain dry from cup of gold,
Wine with ware of Syria bought.
Dear must be that merchant bold
To the gods, for he has brought

Safely o'er Atlanta's wave,
Three or four times in the year,
All his cargoes, purchased dear.
But for me, to wealth no slave,

Simple fare shall be my feast:
Olives, endives, mallows light;
Luxury brings cares increased.
Grant, Apollo, that aright

I enjoy whate'er my lot
Brings to me in life's full prime;
Then, when comes my autumn time,
Let my harp be not forgot.

THE TENTH EPISTLE OF HORACE

Hail Fuscus! We who love the country send
Greetings to you, our town-enamored friend.
Divergent tastes have we in this alone,
In all besides twin purposes we own:
One our dislikes; what either dove approves
His fellow crony lauds with friendly coos.
You love your city nest, but dearer far
To me the blessings of the country are:
Rivers and brooks and rocks half hid with moss,
And shady groves where wind-swung branches toss.

What ask you more? Complete I live and reign,
Relieved from all you laud with loud acclaim,
And what most seek; as, having fled the priest,
The cake-cloyed servant fain would sparsely feast
On coarse-grained bread. Now, if our lives should be
In harmony with nature, and if we
Should choose with care the home where we shall
 dwell,

Know you a place which suits the case so well
As does the blessed country? Do you know
Where winters are more tempered, or where blow
More grateful winds the Dog Star to assuage,
Or calm the sun-roused Lion's ramping rage?
Show me where Cares on Sleep less seldom wage
Successful war. For fragrant sense and sheen
Can stained mosaics compare with sylvan green?
Does city water through your pipes of lead
More purely flow than where, by brooklets fed,
The rural river ripples o'er her bed?
Why, e'en your columns imitate our trees!
The house o'erlooking spreading lawns agrees
With general taste. Forked out with might and main,
Nature slips back into your haunts again.
The trader who true Tyrian can not tell
From that cheap purple which Aquinum's shell
Does yield, receives less certain vital loss
Than he who knows not Truth from Error's dross.
Whoso is over-pleased by Fortune's smile
Is shaken much when served in rougher style.
If anything at all you much desire,

A

You'll dread its loss. Flee greatness! Why aspire
When those who dwell in huts in peace excel
The kings and courtiers who in mansions dwell?

The horse, unarmed to fight the hornéd deer,
Had often fled the feeding ground in fear.
At last for aid he took upon his back
A rider, and so conquered — but, alack,
He'd lost his liberty: he could not shake
The rider off, the bit he could not break.
He who for fear of poverty prefers
Money to liberty thus basely errs,
Since he must bear a rider on his back
And serve for aye because of one great lack,
The skill to use a little. Ill at ease
Is he with his affairs. They can not please.
For when the shoe 's too great, the ankle turns;
And when too small, the cramped foot aches and
burns.

Contented with your lot you wisely live,
Aristus; and I hope you will not give
Unpunished liberty to me who seem
To urge advice in never-ending stream.
Collected wealth will serve, or else command;
See that you pull the rope, or understand
'Twill drag you after. This I dictate here
At ease, soft-shaded by the temple near,
Sacred to rest, Vacuna's mouldering shrine —
My one regret, your lot is not as mine.

CLASS DAY POEM, 1908

The law of life is change; we cannot stay.
Though paths be pleasant, and the dallying breeze
Sing us a siren song of dreamful ease,
The Soul of souls commands, "Away, away!"

The law of life is change. Though paths be steep,
And in despair we fling us down and cry,
"Another step, O God, we cannot try!"
We must go up, or, as the torrents sweep

From the pure peaks whose brows of taintless snow
Bathe in the far serene of crystal blue,
Down, down we'll plunge the muddy gorges through,
With souls all stained, to vaporous vales below.

Each day is a Commencement, and each night
Writes on the deeds of daylight *Nevermore*;
We part — to meet, perhaps — but on time's shore
Never again to taste the same delight.

Fain would we stay the eternal tide of time,
And loiter where we've found that life is sweet,
Greet every day the friends we love to greet —
Pleasant the flowery vale, why should we climb?

O college days! O glad companionship!
O young hearts beating high with hope and cheer,
It cannot be our parting is so near!
Why have our handclasps this convulsive grip?

What dreams of conquest have we cherished here!
What purposes to wrap the whole wide world
In the warm mantle of our love, enfurled
From pain, and doubt, despair, and cringing fear!

Buoyant the heart of youth as song of lark;
Yet not so bright has been our path alway,
But we have seen gold sunsets fade to gray,
And felt the cheerless chill of closing dark.

The law of life is change. Be this our joy
That though the golden promise of to-day
We cannot hold, to-morrow's dawning ray
May bring us golden good with less alloy.

Better is e'er before us, let us on;
On to the joy of service, on to make
The world a little better, and to take
The crown for those who gladly, boldly don

Truth's armor, and undaunted to the end,
Fight the good fight, for self, for man, for God;
Smite every wrong with never wearying rod
Till heaven and earth at God's horizon blend.

But may we shun the mad, unthinking strife —
Curse of this age — which wildly brawls along,
Drowning in vulgar clamor, fierce and strong,
God's still, small voice which whispers through the life

Of quiet, open souls with ears atune
To every subtle melody on high,
Who hear the star songs drop from summer sky,
And night's sad sandals pace the rustling gloom.

Silent the path that leads us to the best.
Behold the thunderous waves which madly seek
To scale the shore and gain the purple peak
Leap up the rocky strand with wild unrest.

But no: their high-flung spray but bathes the base
Of towering cliffs along the barrier shore.
Vainly they dash and foam; with baffled roar
Each billow breaks against the rock's black face.

But in the glassy calm, each tiny drop
That feels the thrill of the sun's searching love
Rises unnoticed, and from clouds above
Falls, crystal pure, on the white mountain top.

So, listening to the voices of the stars,
Let us step out on our divergent ways,
Sure that the rosy gates of future days
Hold greater gifts behind their glowing bars.

Farewell, old Albion! A long farewell
To those whose noble precepts, nobler lives,
Have shown the blest reward of whoso strives
To gain the heights where Truth's companions dwell.

Farewell, old Albion! We cannot name
Thy pleasant nooks, thy thousand sad, sweet ties
Which softening recollection sanctifies,
And love illumines with her holy flame.

Farewell, old Alma Mater! Sterner calls
Sound in the soul and we must haste away.
Dear wast thou ever, dearer far to-day —
Blessings forever on thy sacred walls!

THE DEATH OF LEANDER

The stinging spray beats hard against my face,
And each high-crested billow
Buries my head in whelming sheets of foam;
A dread foreboding of the cold embrace
Of Neptune's nymphs, deep in their horrid home,
Shudders along my limbs, as shakes the willow

In the first blast from winter's icy peak.
My strength is almost gone. O Gods above,
For one brief moment of that glad life's flood
As when with bounding heart and flushing cheek,

Tumultuous joy atingle in my blood,
I clove the sunset calm to seek my love!
Now a ghastly gray creeps from the orient
Athwart the starless gloom of sky and wave,
The first dim promise of the shrouded morn.
Such mockery of light the gods have sent
To one whose spirit sinks to Styx forlorn,
Without a tomb to mark his oozy grave.

Hero, my love, I ne'er shall clasp again
Thy radiant form. The jealous gods have reft
The more than mortal bliss we twain enjoyed.
I sink, I sink amid the monstrous main
Whose mad roar smites my ears to right and left,
Whose hundred tongues froth up to lick the void.

I faint, I swoon, my limbs are numb and chill,
A dizzy sickness flutters at my heart,
All is a blur, a blank and gurgling fall —
Gloat, then, ye jealous Gods, aye, gloat your fill!
But age to age shall hear Leander's call;
Triumphant love defies death's bitter dart!

THE CLIFF OF CLEA

The dark sea moans
And the forest groans
At night by the Cliff of Clea ;
And woe to the ship
Whose timbers split
At its base in the boiling sea.

For the rock is steep
Where the mad waves leap,
Leap up from the moaning sea ;
And no hand to save
From the gulping wave ;
None dwell by the Cliff of Clea.

No cot doth lurk
In the woods, no kirk
Lifts spire nigh the Cliff of Clea ;
At night none care
To loiter there
Where hollow rumbles the sea.

For when midnight's near
A laugh you hear
Go shivering over the sea :
An unhallowed sprite
In the dead of night
Laughs loud from the Cliff of Clea.

Though the night be mild
That laughter wild
Shrills out from the Cliff of Clea;
When roars the storm
That laugh of scorn
Shrieks high o'er the roar of the sea.

Oh, the blood runs chill
And the heart stands still
To hear o'er the shivering sea
That fiendish sound
Run echoing round
The horrible Cliff of Clea.

For, years ago
(As old wives know)
On the strand near the Cliff of Clea,
A youth did part
From his own sweetheart
And sailed o'er the murmuring sea.

By the ocean blue
He swore to be true
While he sailed on the sundering sea;
But his heart soon strayed
From the lonely maid
Who watched on the Cliff of Clea.

Ah, oft she wept,
And little she slept,

That maid on the Cliff of Clea ;
While her lover played
With a foreign maid
On the further shore of the sea.

At last, one night
While the moon shone bright,
She saw on the shimmering sea
The longed-for ship
Round the headland slip
Toward the cove near the Cliff of Clea.

The ship drew near,
That ship so dear
To the maid on the Cliff of Clea,
And she cried "All hail!"
For she saw by the rail
Her loved one safe from the sea.

But the ship wore round,
At that joyous sound ;
And, gazing over the sea,
At her loved one's side
A foreign bride
She saw from the Cliff of Clea.

As the great ship passed,
He held her fast
And laughed o'er the moonlit sea ;
With his foreign bride

Clasped close to his side
He sailed from the Cliff of Clea.

Then the maid looked high
To the moon-throned sky
That arched o'er the shimmering sea:—
"O God, for a breeze
And monster seas!
For a wreck at the Cliff of Clea!"

But the sea was calm
And the ship sailed on,
Away from the Cliff of Clea,
And the moon looked down
With never a frown
On the ship and the shimmering sea.

Then the cross that hung
Round her throat she flung
With a fierce curse into the sea,
And she shrieked her prayer
To the Prince of the Air
For a wreck on the Cliff of Clea.

Black clouds right soon
Did smother the moon,
And the blast roared up from the sea;
The thunders crashed,
And the breakers lashed
The base of the Cliff of Clea.

Each tough tall mast
Was snapped by the blast,
And the madly boiling sea
Hurled the ship amain
Through the hurricane
Toward the terrible Cliff of Clea.

And pale on the deck
Of the shuddering wreck,
Gazing up at the Cliff of Clea,
The youth and his bride
By the maid were descried
As she glared o'er the plunging sea.

Then her laugh shrieked high
To the storm-strewn sky
As the crashing, crunching sea
With one shivering shock
Split the ship on the rock
At the base of the Cliff of Clea.

Then, laughing again,
She leaped into the main,
Leaped down from the Cliff of Clea;
But with fiendish delight
Even yet in the night
Sounds that laugh o'er the moaning sea.

NIAGARA

Thunders of God, dropped down into the world,
Divorced of heaven's frown and forked fires,
Heard where Niagara's gleaming spray is hurled
High heavenward by power that never tires;

Titanic notes, long echoing down the ages,
Filling the savage heart with awe and wonder,
To think — ah God, my soul's hot anger rages! —
Mean modern man would *sell* your thrilling thunder.

TO LAKE HURON

Dear Huron, how I love thy changing mood!
Whether the blue dome arches o'er thy breast,
Or clouds tempestuous o'er thy waters brood.
I love thee when thou liest still at rest;
But more, when rocking in the mad wind's arms,
Thy trampling billows churn the thund'rous bar,
While on the blurred horizon line afar
Thou kissest the murk sky with frothy lips,
And o'er thee shrieks the gull with shrill alarms,
And madly plunge the rocking, rolling ships.
For I was born upon thy shingly strand,
My infant ears drank in thy music wild,
And those same notes which charmed me when a child
In riper years aye call me from the land.

FISHING

Up at dim, gray dawn and out on the lumber docks,
While a chill mist rose from the bay, and a dead swell
 sobbed in the slabs,
Numb hands holding a pole that shook with the cold
 and the knocks
Of a youthful fisherman's heart, athrill for the hungry
 grabs

Of the great lake perch. And then — oh, the tug on
 the bending pole,
The splash at the surface, the swing of the dripping,
 wriggling prize!
Will he slip from the hook and be lost where the deep
 gray waters roll,
Or land with mouth agape, spread fins, and staring
 eyes?

Ah, sometimes the fishing was good, and sometimes
 no fish at all
Deigned to be fooled by the bait; but better than fins
 or scales
I drew from the lake and the sky, the depth and the
 distance, the tall
Masts of the anchored ships or spread of the quiver-
 ing sails.

Oh, the marvelous fish that I caught! — the mystic
birth-light of dawn,
The miracle of the sun's rising, God's breath in the
stir of the breeze,
The guttural gush of the swell, monotonous, low, and
forlorn —
What fisher can equal my catch, though he rifle the
wealth of the seas?

AT THE RIVER MOUTH

Often I walked the tramway between the lumber piles,
Breathing a resinous fragrance, the odor of sawn pine,
Stirred by freshening whiffs, if the day were fair,
from the miles
Of the open lake that sparkled to the horizon line.

The tramway followed the river, and then at the
river's mouth
Angled straight to the left, and here at the turn of
the dock,
Reached by a bit of a bridge and facing east by south,
Was the square-built lighthouse pier, a strong box
filled with rock.

A low, stout, tapering tower stood on the solid pier,
Open below; in whose shelter when the rain hissed
into the foam,

You might sit on the stairs that led to the chambers
above, and hear
The shock of the buffeting waves and watch the tugs
come home.

Oh, the rolling, plunging tugs, ever pursued and
pursued
By the tumbling, crumbling monsters born of the
breath of the gale!
Oh, the reckless tugs that rode on the backs of this
giant brood
As a merman bold might ride on the back of a mad-
dened whale.

Ah, here have I watched and listened all seasons and
all weathers,
At sunrise, sunset, noonday, by the light of the stars
or the moon;
And here have I stood with God when, black as a
raven's feathers,
A starless midnight brooded, and the world lay deep
in a swoon.

And now in my snug study where never a great wave
jars,
Where the books are ranged, and the pen plods with
the plodding hour,
When sick of the steps of thought, my soul leaps out
to the stars,
I hear the plunge of the billows at the base of that
lighthouse tower.

FANCY

Where lisps the ripple on the marge,
The reedy marge of little lake,
The boy has launched his tiny barge.
He sees the foaming billows break

O'er jagged rocks, he hears the roar
Upthundering from the heaving main;
The while his barge is bobbing o'er
The dimpled surface, and has ta'en

Her course afoul a waving weed—
God save the struggling crew! The wreck
Drives rockward where the demons lead;
Death's jaws have crunched the groaning deck!

THE IDLER

At earliest morn, before the sun
Had tinged the waves with rose and gold,
He sat him down upon a bold
Out-jutting crag where breakers run;

And the split crests, on either side
Back curling from the granite beak,

Rush to the shore they madly seek
And waste in foam their towering pride.

He sat him down with shoulders bent
And propped his chin between his hands,
The while the billow-trampled sands
Tumultuous plaint to the morning sent.

Up came the sun with golden glint
On billow's crest and whitening sail,
And sea-gulls, poising on the gale,
Caught and returned the glorious tint.

While still he sat with musing eye,
All thoughtless of the worried world,
As nested bird with pinions furled
Sleeps, swaying soft, 'neath starlit sky.

All day he sat; while gleaming specks
Crossed and recrossed the wedded blue,
And fisher craft went plunging through
The boiling shoals with streaming decks.

Down sank the sun; the western clouds
Glowed with the tints of gold and rose,
While breakers, white as mountain snows,
Still pressed upon the beach in crowds.

No skill had he to weave the line
Or wield the painter's magic brush.
Child-heart, to him the roaring rush
Of wind and wave was all divine.

THE SEA-SEEKER

"Ah, graybeard mariner, prithee stay!
Rotten thy boat and rough the wave;
Thou'rt mad in that worn wreck to brave
The thunderous billow's tossing spray.
Tarry thou here ashore with me" —
"Hinder me not, I seek the sea."

"Thou seekest the sea! Why, wild old man,
Thy beard 's o'erfrothed with ocean foam,
The sea, methinks, has been thy home
A long life's many-seasoned span.
Wherefore thy answer riddles me;
The sea thou hast found, why seek the sea?"

"My son" — the gray-beard turned his eyes,
Eager as youth, but calm as stars
Which watch all night from cloudless skies
O'er rolling deeps and wrangling bars,
Turned he his bright, calm eyes on me —
"Not mad am I who seek the sea."

“Though many a zephyr mild, ’tis true,
Has fanned my skiff along the deep,
And oft betwixt the blue and blue,
I’ve felt the storm, sea-shaking, sweep,
Yet new and strange these sights to me
And, wonder-thrilled, I seek the sea.

“Ah many and many a time I’ve sailed
Toward the setting sun o’er waves of fire,
With heart athrob and cheek that paled,
My soul all eager to inquire
Of sea sprites fair who sang to me
And lured me on to seek the sea.

“For the sea — the sea ’s a wonder wild
In every roll, in every roar;
In sleep serene and starry mild,
Or madly plunging ’gainst the shore.
The illusive sea-soul lureth me —
Hark, the waves call — I seek the sea.”

PAN'S APOLOGY

She spoke and my heart listened —
How could it else?
Ah silver tones that thrilled the pulsing air,
Ethereal melody beyond compare,
Such as the mosses hear, when on them pelts
The floweret bell, with pearly dew's o'erglistened;
I could but hear,
And follow over brook and shimmering mere —
One thought, but one, to keep that voice anear.

SOUL SURFACE

Fair face, pure face, of sweet and mobile lines,
The home of light and shadow! Changing moods
Swift glance into each other like the rhymes
Of subtle, vibrant odes. Now fancy broods

Deep in the inmost heart, now flits and hovers
A moment o'er a prompted thought, as lovers
Gaze on the moon's face that with transient gleam
Bathes her in blue the gulping clouds between.

Fair face, pure face, that through all changes shows
Haunted forever by a restless pain;

The eyes o'ersun with laughter, and the glows
Of joy shine sweetly through; but soon again
Comes yearning pain back to those soul-deep eyes,
And shadowed sorrow on the sweet face lies.

O vestal soul,
So delicately, beautifully shrined
In thy translucent fane,
Ah, what thy dole?
Ah, what thy shadowing sorrow dim-descried?
Ah what thy yearning pain?

MY MADELINE

I search the depths of thy blue eyes,
 My Madeline;
The sweet, chaste light that purifies
Out-shines from those clear orbs, which rise
To meet my own with gaze divine,
 My Madeline.

Such sweet, unconscious purity,
 My Madeline,
I can but meet all reverently;
All reverently, tho' tenderly,
I gaze into those eyes of thine,
 My Madeline.

And thou canst never know nor guess,
 My Madeline,
Nor ever can my tongue express
How much, how many thou dost bless
By thy unconscious holiness,
 My Madeline.

Only the angel host on high,
 My Madeline,
The angel host that ever fly
To guard thy form and hover nigh,
Can count the stars which crown thy sky,
 My Madeline.

A PORTRAIT

A darkling sheen of the eyes,
Incomparable curve of the lips,
Ruby-red, where the smile never dies;
Dainty fingers whose tapering tips

Rest caressingly there on the rose
Whose envious beauty 's upturned —
Pathetic despair in its pose —
To your face where the secret 's unlearned.

A MAIDEN'S CHAMBER

This is her chamber. What a sacred air
Pervades the place! How often have these walls
Heard the low murmur of her whispered prayer,
Here at the bedside altar uttered, where
Heaven has oped her pearly-ported halls!

MORNING

Oh sing me a song, little bird,
A song of the thrilling rapture
You feel when you mount the blue,
And the first red sunbeam capture;
As you soar from the glistening dew,
Past the rustling leaves, wind-stirred,
What joy to feel
The morn's breath steal
With soft caress 'neath your pulsing wings,
While the white mists rise
To the rosy skies,
Morn's cup bubbling o'er with the joy he brings.

NATURE'S GUEST

Oh, naught so fair
In earth or air,
In ocean, rill, or fountain!
No form of grace
The eye may trace
In woodsy dell or mountain!

Ah, maiden sweet,
What graces meet
In you! What beauties shower
From Nature's hand!
For you command
All Aphrodite's dower.

That gladsome morn
When you were born
The lark, the lark soared higher,
And through the blue
Brought down to you
Twin spheres of starry fire.

How else surmise
You gained those eyes
Whose glance, so tremulous sweet,
Doth thrill the heart
Whene'er they dart
There shafts of maddening heat?

Could one distil
The rosy thrill
From heaven's blossoming dawn,
Could the rippling sheen
Where lilies lean
From the laughing brook be drawn,

Each floweret fair,
All jewels rare,
All shells that sea-beds tile
Their myriad glow
Give up — ah no,
'Twould not suggest your smile!

Since Nature's arms
Embrace no charms
The best whereof can mate yours,
A light divine
On you must shine,
A light more fair than Nature's.

A LIVING LYRIC

Who shall name the witching light that glances from
her dancing eyes?

Or the sweetly thrilling music of her soft and low
replies?

Or the heart-entangling charm that in each raven
ringlet lies?

Liquid murmur of the stream, shifting colors of the
skies,

 All combined

 In one pearl,

 Sweetly rhymed

 In one girl —

All combined and sweetly rhymed in each coyly curv-
ing curl.

A LOVE LILT

Mine own, at the dawn of the day

I love thee, I love thee, I love thee!

When the sun shoots his hot noontide ray,

Then I love thee, I love thee, I love thee!

And now while the glow fades away,

And the stars stud the blue dome above me,

My heart sings the same lilting lay —

O I love thee, I love thee, I love thee!

COMPLETION

Mine own, I have followed the forest trails,
And slept by many a plashing waterfall;
Have heard the murmur of the leafy sails,
Wind-stirred, felt the soft-saddening pall
Of twilight gloom
Stoop from the dark'ning sky and wrap the slumb'rous
 world,
Till all enfurled
In soothing shade, sharp crag and flower's bloom:
And all was fair;
Yet everywhere —
Below, above —
A haunting incompleteness,
Till, flooding all with sweetness,
Came love.

CUPID ABOARD

Away, away! The rolling bay
Is sparkling in the sun,
And fresh and fair the breezes dare
The bold to share the fun.

O fresh and free for you and me
Be sure the breezes blow.

Then leave the strand, the dusty land —
Away, away we go!

O sweet to feel the gurgling keel
Beneath! To watch the sail
Swell out to lee! Each eager sea
O'erclimbs the dipping rail.

While swiftly soar the gulls, and o'er
Our spray-besprinkled boat,
In wonder stare adown the air
At our big bird afloat.

Alas, I fear, my airy dear,
The breeze would snatch away
Your form in haste, if round your waist
My arm should fail to stray.

The naughty wind has sweetly sinned
To kiss your lips and cheek —
O let me play the breeze to-day,
And emulate the freak!

Be sure, my love, life's sea above
We two might sail together;
With you beside, my boat would ride
Howe'er so rough the weather.

Away, away, across the bay,
And soon to reach the shore;
But full and free love's nectared sea
Sweeps sparkling far before.

THE SENIOR MAID

O hast thou seen the Senior 'Maid?
The Senior Maid in cap and gown?
Hast thou beheld the lightsome shade
Come tripping soft the path adown?
How, through the gleaming snow, her form
Presents sweet contrast to the storm?
O Freshie, quake and be afraid!
She comes, she comes, the Senior Maid.

The Senior Maid in cap and gown
Who softly trips the path adown,
What cares she if her sparkling eyes
Have moved a lonely youth to sighs?
What cares she though the freshman heart
Be cleft in twain and torn apart?
That heart beneath her feet low laid,
She sweetly smiles, the Senior Maid.

But when the Maid has laid aside
Her sable garment, floating wide,
Has doffed her tasseled, angled hat —
That angled both for barb and frat —
The Freshie knows what lent the charm
To Senior Maid who wrought such harm;
For by the change it is displayed,
By cap and gown is Senior made.

THE DEVIL TAKE THE GIRL

The devil take the girl! I said,
The devil take the girl!
Those kiss-inviting lips so red,
That low, sweet voice, each waving curl,
Were but to tantalize and tangle —
Bright flies wherewith to deftly angle,
Till, from the brook,
By silken thread she saw me dangle
Upon her hook.

The devil take the girl! ah yes,
The devil take the girl!
O'er mountain crag and ocean level
Sweep her far with dizzy whirl,
Where the smoking lavas purl —
But O thou witch! I must confess
I'd like to be — the devil.

WHY WE CELEBRATE

George Washington, our country's dad,
He up and slew a cherry tree;
That made our country's grand-dad mad —
O he was mad, as mad could be!

Now George he couldn't tell a lie
(He wasn't bad like you and me)
And so he sobbed out, "Pa, 'twas I,
I tomahawked the cherry tree."

And then our country's daddy's dad
Was glad 'cause George no lie would lay
On his square soul all undefiled —
That's why we celebrate the day.

THE INVISIBLE HARVEST

The hard-eyed farmer yonder seems to wonder
What business I have hanging round his land;
Thinks me a tax assessor seeking plunder,
Would like to have me clearly understand
I should come straight to him, or go to thunder! —
To him, proud owner of this muck and sand.

Little he understands the stranger's reason
For loitering by the roadside while the light
Slants in long rays, this sweet mid-summer season,
Through woodland witcheries wherein the night
Already lurks in lengthening shades of trees on
The rich, dark velvet — Whitman's now by right.

With the real owner of your fertile good land
My business is. I care not for your yield

Of corn and hay and kine. Ah, truly should land
Yield only these? A subtle edge I wield
To cut a little wonder from your woodland
And reap a little beauty from your field.

THE POET'S PAIN

Ah yes, they think we play
And dally with the pen,
And airy sprites unconjure with a spell
To weave our tuneful lay,
Nor toil like other men,
That what we buy for naught for fame we sell.

Alas, they cannot know
The heart's red blood we spill,
The panting pain and agony of the chase
When dies the exultant glow
From the wearied heart, and still
The taunting vision flits before our face.

PRAYER OF THE WEARY HEART

O God, my heart is weary!
All the day
The world has beat and clashed against my soul;
The way is long, the way is long and dreary,
Far the goal;
Father, forgive me, but I only pray —
Howe'er unthankful my sad prayer may seem —
I *can* but pray, dear God, for Lethe's stream!

O Father, my heart's fainting —
Morning breaks,
It breaks with burning splendors o'er the world,
An angel hand the eastern sky seems painting,
Dawn's unfurled
The birdling wings — alas, this beauty makes
My heart but sadder; midst the glorious gleam
I only pray, dear God, for Lethe's stream.

O Father, I have striven, striven
To do my part;
Have strained each nerve to run the course of life;
Have tried to use the strength which thou hast given;
But now from strife
My soul shrinks fainting, and my weary heart
Recoils with pain e'en from the morning's gleam,
Even *now* I can but pray for Lethe's stream.

O God, the world seems hollow —
Nothing worth;
How can I strive with nothing worth the pain?
Where leads the sharded path that I should follow?
Why the strain?
Since heaven itself seems but a joyless dearth —
Forgive me, Father, that I dare to deem
Thy heaven a dearth, and pray for Lethe's stream.

WHAT IS A SONNET?

What is a sonnet? 'Tis a wondrous box
Like that the gods gave to Pandora, filled
With precious memory perfumes, all distilled
From noble hearts in pain. The sonnet locks
Tight in its tiny walls a world of mocks,
Scornings, neglects; many fair blossoms chilled
By springtide frosts in the soul's gardens, killed
Long ere the time of fruitage; and little flocks
Of half-hushed songsters. Ah, it sometimes seems
A jewelled and translucent sepulcher
Holding the bitter and sweet, the glooms and gleams
Of all the personal past embalmed and pure;
A Morphean cave, clouded with tragic dreams,
Through which the eyes of Hope shine soft and sure.

TO POESY

O Poesy, no joyous pilgrim waits
Before thy temple; but from cavern shades
And weary leagues of boundless, gloomy glades,
I come with bowed head to thy close-barred gates.
Nor hope to hear aught that the heart elates,
No song of joy whose liltng ripple aids
The exiled soul to brave the whirling blades
That guard lost paradise. The sullen fates
Allow me no such hope. I only come
To hearken, if, perchance, with straining ear
I may but catch some low and droning hum
From chambers far within, while I stand here
And listen till my tingling nerves are numb
To thy sweet murmurings, so far, so dear.

TO ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Thy soul wast ever in sad twilight's train:
An early twilight, when the westering sun
Sinks into storm clouds ere his course is run;
Ere starry births can heal the pale sky's pain,
But low winds sigh of gloomy night and rain,
And the world's woe seems only just begun,
Where hearts must sicken till lone life be done,

And every benediction turns to bane.
Sad twilight soul — Yet as that yearning tomb
(Which can not wait to gulf the falling king
But rises, rumbling, with its arms of gloom
To drag him down) will sometimes burst, and fling
The imprisoned glory from its walls of doom —
Such golden promise does thy sad verse bring.

TO EDGAR ALLAN POE

O slandered here and sinned against! But now
Thy melody, too fine for sluggish air,
Pulses in rhythmic waves of ether where
Celestial spheres are vocal. There thy brow
Glow with the glory of that song, and thou
Joinest the symphony of yearning prayer
Which all the rapturous immortals bear
To the Ineffable, before whom bow
The seraph-songsters. O world-wearied sprite
That flashed across the dense, dank gloom of earth,
Thrilling a moment our cold, clammy night
With thy sweet meteor train of stellar birth —
Doers of evil, dull to heavenly worth,
Men loved their darkness better than thy light.

TO THEE, BRIGHT SPIRIT

To thee, bright spirit in the blest abode,
To thee, dear mother of the one I love,
I open wide my heart that from above
Thou mayst look down along the star-paved road;
And by the white light which for aye has flowed
From God's eternal throne and the radiance of
The hovering pinions of his spirit-dove,
Search me, O thou to whom my all is owed.
And whatsoever in my mortal heart
Shows black and blemished in that chastening light —
Low thoughts the sources whence mean actions start,
Rude passions that the soul's fair blossoms blight —
I pray that thou, by some high heavenly art,
Wilt show to me that I may love aright.

THE CHURCH

I saw the church in the making: the sons of toil,
Coarse-clad and roughly bearded, plied them there
With shovel and trowel, hammer and saw and square,
Working at dizzy heights, or deep in the soil
Through oozing mud compelled to delve and moil
To gain a morsel of bread; while through their care,
Firm-based and beautiful the house of prayer

Rose, a fair fortress of the Christ to foil
The Prince of Darkness. Then, on the Sabbath morn
I saw the finished church. As the solemn bell
Pealed from the steeple, to this beauteous bourne
Thronged the sleek sons of wealth, and hither all
Fashion's fair daughters tripped with pert footfall —
But where were the builders? Where were the weary
and worn?

THE ATHEIST

O desolate town this dawnless morn! The wind
Howls chill and drear, haunting your vacancy;
The gusty snows, powdering from roof and tree,
Gray in the smothered street-lamp's haze, can find
No rest from wandering, dreary, restless, blind.
And yet beneath those shivering roofs may be
Soft, rosy dreams of slumbering infancy,
Safe-havened within the heaven of thoughtless mind.
Alas, O sifting snow, fit emblem thou —
Cold, naked, helpless in the bitter blast —
O' my own life! With eyes unveiled now
I watch the mindless All that whirls me fast
From nothing unto nothing, wondering how
To gain one sweet, blind moment, first and last.

OMEGA

Death lowers in the leaden sky; the air
Is chilled with death; o'er all the world the snow
Rests with a dreary weight; far, far below,
The seeds of life in impotent despair
Yield to the drear dominion; all that's fair —
All living stir, all joyous flush and glow
Are wrapped within a shroud of whited woe,
And death, drear death, is tyrant everywhere.
Ah, mock me not by telling of the spring,
The spring that through the icy trees and o'er
The frozen stream shall pass with magic wing,
And break death's dreary reign from shore to shore.
What joy, a few death-girdled springs to sing? —
Beyond the throbbing stars waits death forevermore.

A NOVEMBER DAY

Dear love, dear love, the drear November day
Fades slowly into gray, chill, cheerless night,
And my tired heart doth shiver with affright
To think of all the long thorn-curséd way
My soul must travel till the breaking day
Doth bring again the birth-pangs of new light
With its fresh curse upon my aching sight

And sickening throb of agonized dismay.
Ah God, dear God, what peace when day is done?
Ah God, dear God, what peace at coming morn?
The pale stars in high heaven, every one,
Do mock me with their myriad gaze of scorn;
Then, o'er their gray cold grave the tyrant sun
Stalks like cruel pain o'er my lost hopes forlorn.

DESPAIR AND SCORN

The morn was bright with promise, but a cloud —
Huge, dusky, chill — has blurred the rosy light;
Better by far the nothingness of night
Than halting day with brooding glooms endowed!
Better *no* dawn, if there be not allowed
A cheerful day to fill the promise right!
Was it for this the orient was bedight?
O festal torches smothered in a shroud!
So moaned my heart, but through the gathering gloom
A low, hard voice of calm disdain I heard:
“Poor weakling, has the bright world proved a tomb?
At least the vault is spacious; there is room
To raise thy forehead, godlike, and to gird
Thy armor on, undaunted by thy doom.”

CHRISTMAS EVE

Oh I wonder if to-night
They should bring the Holy Child
To the blare and blazing light,
To the worry and affright,
Of our cities, commerce-wild;
Would he not shrink back afraid,
Nestle close in Mary's arms,
While his wide-eyed glances strayed
Through the crowd that rocked and swayed,
Clamoring confused alarms?

Who, amid that sordid sea,
So ill-suited to the scene
As the child? Oh, would not he
Wonder, as do sometimes we,
What these mad processions mean?

A SOUL'S ERROR

It is not that you do not love me,
Marguerite,
Not that which makes me sad.
I could adore thee, starred above me,
That were meet;
And though no lyrics glad

Should well up from a heart rejoicing,
Marguerite,
I could thank God that He
Had set my soul-strings all avoicing
Praises sweet,
For thy pure light on me.

But this: that I mistook for starlight,
Marguerite,
The marsh-lamp's flickering flare;
An earthly exhalation for the far light
Pure, replete
With heavenly flashings fair.

REPENTANCE

When the eyes grow dim and vacant
And the nerves are slack and stale,
When the flesh hangs shrunk and sallow
And the blood is thin and pale,
Comes Repentance, pointing finger,
Shaking head at bygone days
When the stream of life ran redder
Down the winding, sinful ways.

O Repentance, false Repentance!
Cold regret for what is past!
Cold regret that hides a longing

For the joys which could not last.
O inert, inane Repentance,
Shrivelled child of youth and sin,
More immoral than indulgence —
Bitter dregs where sweets have been!

Ah, sham, hypocrite, Repentance!
When the wine no more imparts
Glow and gladness, and the gaming
Fails to thrill our jaded hearts,
When no more the sanguine beauty
Of witch-woman waves away
All cold spectres of the morrow
With the wand of warm to-day —

Then to talk of pious, prayerful,
Saintly sweet Repentance, ah,
That shall gladden the high angels
In their heavenly mansions. Bah!
That shall make the devils, rather,
Hotter blush in hell's red heat
Since who dared to drink sin's poison
Dared but while the draft was sweet.

A MODERN OMAR

Forget, forget the prudence of the past!
The future consequences? Let them be!
The past is dead: it knows nor feast nor fast.
The past is dead. The future, who can see?

'Tis true, my love, this bliss may turn to woe,
The present joy become a thing despised;
But sorrow *always* follows bliss, we know:
Or guilty, or divine, 'tis soon by pain surprised.

Does not the shadow ever chase the sun?
And if at morn, my love, you shut your eyes,
Will that assure you of light when day is done, —
Bring back a single beam when sunset dies?

Two Mekka-pilgrims in a desert waste
Came suddenly unto a little dell:
Date palms o'ershadowed all the verdant place,
And crystal waters sprayed, and sparkling fell.

One pilgrim paused to pluck the dangling fruit,
And cool his lips and limbs in the fountain's spray;
The other, Allah and Mahound to suit,
Bit his parched lips and held his fasting way.

Both perished ere they reached their journey's end;
But one had tasted pleasure by the way,
And accepted all that grudging life would lend.
Which was the wiser pilgrim? Tell me, pray.

ON THE WHEEL

Helpless creature in the basket,
Helpless creature in the casket —
This the alpha and omega of the round of human life?
What precedes or what comes after
This brief course of tears and laughter?
Many clamorous creeds give answer, but their answers
are at strife.

We accept as surest, clearest,
The crude answer that is nearest,
Pack the question in the closet while we rush into the
street;
Join the round of parting, greeting,
Round of working and of eating —
Eating that our hands may labor, laboring that our
mouths may eat.

Only here and there some hectic,
Fevered toiler turns a skeptic,
Stops to question what the meaning of the weary
whirl may be;

Sowing, reaping, reaping, sowing
Serve to keep life's wheel agoing,
But he wonders if the mad wheel has an axle fixed
or free.

Does the wheel keep turning, turning —
One unmeaning, endless churning,
Shaking dead dust into breathing, shaking live dust
out of breath?

Does the wheel toil up some sloping
Wondrous path to hills of hoping?
Does the wheel spin down some dizzying, slippery
slope to depths of death?

Thus he questions, thus he ponders
Till his mind in circles wonders,
Wanders round a dizzy circle of the multiform Per-
chance.

How can one upon the turning
Rim have power of discerning
The wheel's motion in the center while the spokes so
madly dance?

Helpless creature in the basket,
Helpless creature in the casket —
This the alpha and omega of the round of human life?
What precedes or what comes after
This brief course of tears and laughter?
Many clamorous creeds give answer, but their answers
are at strife.

THE EXPOSAL

I sat and gazed at the bend of the sky and over the
spread of the sea
Till the vacant world was athrob with life like the
life that throbbed in me.
And my heart yearned out to the living world, and
the world yearned back to mine,
And Joy leapt up when life met life as grape meets
grape in the wine.

Aye, Joy leapt up; yet his face was strange, and his
eyes half turned aside,
And his whole form shook like a candle-flame when
the door is opened wide.
His wavering smile was wistful-sweet, and his voice,
though it rang like a bell,
Had a yearning close, had a hidden hint of a some-
thing he would not tell.

He prayed to be gone, with a promise to come back
at a word, at a nod,
He promised to lurk in the shade of each task, and
to peep from the very sod;
But the steady gaze of my searching soul, O this he
could not abide!
So he prayed to be gone in his own wild way ere his
soul should ebb like the tide.

But I pinned him fast with the lance of my eye, though
I mourned for his piteous plight,
And he faded before my searching gaze as the sunset
fades into night;
And again, alone by the naked shore, heart-heavy but
phantom-free,
I sat and gazed at the bend of the sky and over the
spread of the sea.

LIGHT AND DARK

In full light, God's straight pathway was sloping
Up the crags, while below him went groping
Pleasure's dupes down to Sin's gilded ark;
His Christ on the road strode before him;
Rough road, but the heavens smiled o'er him,
And a crown on the mountain top for him—
But how would he strive in the dark?

He saw God's might in the mountain,
He felt God leap in the fountain,
He heard God's song from the lark;
'Tis well he with strongest has striven,
Has struggled and striven and thriven—
But tell, e'er our praises we give him,
How would he strive in the dark.

FOREBODINGS

Stately ship, proudly breasting the waves,
There's a rock lying hid in the deep;
There are cold, dimly-lit grotto graves
Where the sea serpents writhingly creep.

Little floweret, nodding anear
To the pathway, half hid in the grass,
There are thoughtless clouts soon to appear
Who will crush you to earth as they pass.

Dauntless youth all atingle with might
So eagerly greeting life's morn,
There's defeat, and despair, and death's night
Closing down on God's pity, man's scorn.

Little maiden with eyes wonder-wide
Gazing out on the great wonder-world,
In yon wood where the song-birds abide
There's a glade where the serpents lie curled.

THE DEWDROPS AND THE SUN

Dainty, little, crystal dewdrops,
Born beneath the beaming stars,
Do you note the day is dawning?
Eastern sky, all crimson bars,
Hangs aloft her gorgeous awning.

Ah, too trustful little dewdrops!
Soon the Sun with nectared light,
Like the God of Love, will thrill you;
You will glow with heaven's delight —
But his fervent kiss will kill you.

THE ANSWER

I prayed for my desire. All the stars
Twinkled in golden mockery; the moon
Was pitiful but powerless. No boon,
No help for me in heaven. Then the world,
The gray, old slumberous earth about me furled
Her poppied shadows — O my soul, my soul,
Better to beat vain wings against the impassable bars!

HER PIANO

How silent now it stands in the half gloom
Of that far corner by the drooping palm!
Faintly the glimmer from yon shaded casement,
As the drawn curtain shivers, round the room
Wavers, and shudders o'er the glossy calm
Of ivory keys and midnight ebony,
While the sad house from chimney top to basement
Groans in the wind's embrace all drearily.

I dare not touch those keys; their ghostly sheen
Through the lone room creeps o'er my shuddering soul
So shivering slow, and leaves it icy numb.
Like marbled sorrows in a graveyard seen,
When the far bells the midnight hours toll,
The hound's death-howl rides down the whimpering
 wind,
Through ragged clouds the starbeams struggling
 come —
Pale, silent keys, God tear them from my mind!

DE PROFUNDIS

I may not tell thee that I love thee, sweet,
Nor fondly breathe thy praises in thine ear,
Never may fold these arms about thee, dear,
'Twere sacrilege my lips with thine should meet.

But here within the temple of my heart,
Here in the secret chamber of my soul,
Here where the mystic notes of music roll,
The mystic notes eluding poet's art —

Here will I shrine thee, love, and bar the door
To every flitting fancy that might taint
The spotless purity of a heavenly saint
Where seraphs sing in the golden-evermore.

In other chambers of my heart are heard
Sometimes the discords of desire and hate,
And unclean spirits at the portals wait,
Ready to hiss the soul-seducing word;

But dim with incense shall this chamber be,
And holy thought and undefiléd love
Shall gird thee round, and only God above
Shall know with what a pang I yearn for thee.

SIGH ON, SAD WIND

Sigh on, sad wind, sigh on!
Sigh through the shivering reeds
That fringe the lonely lake;
Sigh on, sad wind, sigh on
Through the tangled path that leads
By many a bramble and brake
To the worn, old hut o'erclomb with weeds,
Sigh on for a soul's sweet sake.

Sigh on, sad wind, sigh on!
Sob low for the maid of the mere,
More fair than the lily white,
Sigh on, sad wind, sigh on!
For I ween that her soul is anear,
That her soul hovers near on the wings of the night;
Sigh on, for our love was dear.

Sigh on, sad wind, sigh on!
O'er the face of each floweret fair,
Tear-stained by the grief of the gloom.
Sigh on, sad wind, sigh on!
Sigh softly, most mournfully where
The willow weeps over her tomb,
Weeps wofully ever, o'erstooped as in prayer —
God grant I may sleep there soon!

PONCE DE LEON *

O years ago to Florida came Ponce de Leon.
The skies were bright above his head, the breezes
warm and sweet;
But fragrant breeze and shining sky and the blossoms
at his feet
Were dust to him whose aged eyes with fevered
yearning shone.

For Ponce de Leon had felt the fleeting, thieving
hours
Go plundering on their evil way youth's vivid mead-
ows through;
Petal by petal the flowers had died, and pearl by
pearl the dew,
And now life's bitter, withering fruits followed the
glowing flowers.

And so from royal Spain he sailed, from rich and
royal Spain,
A land of weird and wild romance where wondrous
things befell
(But that was in the olden time whereof the legends
tell,

*The reader is reminded that Ponce de Leon (pronounced Pon-the-de-le-on) died in Cuba whither he had retired in the vain hope of being cured of a wound occasioned by a poisoned arrow.

While in his day death knew no bribes and pain was
only pain.)
But in that land beyond the sea, that world as fresh
as strange,
O there, perhaps, the wondrous things were wondrous
things in truth,
And there, 'twas rumored, flowed a fountain of per-
petual youth;
So Ponce de Leon had come through Florida to range.

O many a great and wondrous tree he found, and
many a bird
Unknown in that worn world he left; and many a
fountain, too,
Gushed from this new enchanted ground where frag-
rant flowers grew —
But not, alas, that wondrous fount whereof his heart
had heard.

O Ponce de Leon, we, too, have many marvels
known —
More marvelous than all the things which Florida
unfurled —
We sail the sea in cities, we converse around the
world,
Harness the lightning to our cars, make the very
heavens our own.

And yet for all our marvels we have reaped no real
return.

We have learned this sad distinction in the realm of
wondrous things:
That all to-day's impossibles, full-wrought the mor-
row brings —
Except the things of life itself. For these we vainly
yearn.

Ah, while with feeble steps you sought the fount, the
poisoned dart
O'ertook you in its surer search; on Cuba's isle the
cold,
Inevitable draught you drank, the draught you feared
of old;
Stilled was the last protesting breath, stifled the
straining heart.

Was this the very fount you sought, though all to
you unknown?
Did the bottom of this cup contain the magic draught
in truth?
Amid our barren wonders, well we know eternal
youth
Lurks in death's cup — if anywhere — O Ponce de
Leon.

ALL-SEEING OR UNSEEING

For me it is a solemn joy to walk
Alone beneath the cloudless cope of night,
And feel the gazings of the myriad
All-seeing or unseeing eyes of heaven,
The cold enchantment of whose mute regard
Brings home to me with poignant forcefulness
The stubborn wonder of the universe.
Defiant secrecy is in their gaze;
I, peering in the open cosmic face,
See not a single feature. . . . Solemn stars,
Steady and staring, bright in the awful dark
Of the infinite desert of space! — pathetic points
Of lonely light, yet pitiless, nor seeking
Pity — for oh, the shivering tremulousness
With which your long beams pierce the airy folds
Of this our tiny planet, seems but a twinkle
Of the grim humor of the universe,
The scorn of each flung back at the scorn of all.

All-seeing or unseeing — ah in this
Lies the great riddle of the universe,
The riddle that we can not, dare not solve;
But from the dread dilemma seeking shelter,
Worship our wish about the great Perhaps,
Rejoicing in our coward hearts, indeed,
That we must shirk the absolute, sundering choice

Of thinking it all purpose or all blindness,
All God, or no God — thus our pettiness
Makes profit of the star-writ mystery!

For think; if these same unrevealing stars
Could suddenly shoot forth intenser beams —
Beams that should lay bare in the middle ground
Of our poor human apprehension all
The twin infinities of the far and near,
That we might see, clear as our finger tips
The smallest speck of dust in the Milky Way,
And all the links, lost in the fathomless near,
Between the thought and the thing—then would we
dare

To open eyes and look? Ah, gladly we
Would let the moment pass, fearing that glance
Which should reveal to us a universe
All death and darkness, or all life and light.

So would we all, indeed, — and yet as I
Stare in the haughty star-face of the night,
My soul leaps out to dare the dreadful test.
Oh, I might find a regnant Will in all,
A power unconditioned, never thwarted,
Potent beneficence in all the tangle
Of seeming clash and cruel contradiction!

Or if the truth proved other, and I found
A universe all blind and purposeless,
With what a shuddering yet daring pride

I should gaze out upon the waste of night —
I but a merest nothing on a mote
Of stellar dust in the infinite, uncreated
Never ending, blindly changing whirl
Of universal matter — I so puny,
So powerless, and so transient — and yet lord,
Lord by the pang of poignant consciousness,
Of all that desert realm of rolling spheres.

AT DAWN AND YOUTH

At dawn and youth when life is fresh,
We love the world's vast mystery:
We love the doubt, the storm and stress
Of daring thought; we like to think
An unknown power 's behind the brink —
Not God, not Pan, not Fate; perhaps
Our best conjectures but frail traps
To snare the omnipotently free.

Oh, then indeed, we're glad to feel
That after these heart-throbs intense
Comes — what? to know not if the real
Be glorious life or silent dust,
Faith's sure reward or mock of trust.
But when the evening shadows fall,
Our hearts grow weary of it all;
We shudder at the grave's cold sod,
And yearn for that sure Father-God
Of childhood's faith and innocence.

OUT OF TUNE

O Harp of my Heart, why never a tune?
Melodious music's in air;
To brook song and bird song trips in the glad June
Joy, joy on rapt wing is asoar everywhere:
But mute thy unanswering strings, all mute,
As an old garret's sullen, sad lute.

Ah naught but the moan of the gloom-brooded sea,
Or the sob of the shadow-shook pine,
Calls forth a deep, quivering groan out of thee;
O Harp of my Heart, sad responses are thine!
Then come, sweet atuner, and touch every string,
Come, Love, and my Heart's Harp to heaven shall
ring.

MOTHER MINE

Mother mine, how oft at eve
When the dusky shadows creep
Through my window, while I'm deep
In my book, my mind will leave
Learning's lore and truant fly
To my homeland far away,

Dear home city on the bay,
Fly to thee and hover nigh,
Mother mine!

Mother mine, how oft at morn
When the dim, grey matin light
Steals athwart the raven night,
Heralding the day, new born;
While I ope my heavy eyes,
And the sable folds of sleep
Slip into the mystic deep,
Memory brings thee, precious prize,
Mother mine!

STAR OF MY LIFE

Star of my life, O let me lave
My soul within thy radiant light!
I need thy ray across the night
To guide my clouded course and save

My bark from gulphing waves that lash
The blackened rocks of grim despair;
To starboard, larboard, everywhere,
The towering breakers crash.

Enough, my star, if, eyes astrain
To pierce the midnight gloom, I steer
With only thy sweet light to cheer
In safety o'er the perilous main.

Enough; it may not be my course
Should lead through heaven's peaceful blue,
Above the tossing waves with you —
Above temptation, sin, remorse.

Be this my trust, my bow of hope:
That if I grasp the helm and face
The storm undaunted, straitly trace
My course where thy bright rays do slope

From heaven's serene to breaker's foam,
Unmindful of the shrieking blast,
The haven I may reach at last
And greet thee in thy radiant home.

SORROW'S BOND

I dreamed, dear heart, pale Dawn and Twilight fair
Were lovers vainly yearning to embrace;
But tyrant Day and Night with frowning face
By cruel turns thrust wide apart the pair.

Till kind Eclipse shadowed the glowing Sun,
And Earth and Sky in ashen sadness swooned;
And then — as we, when Sorrow round us gloomed —
The pensive pair were mingled into one.

BENEATH THE STARS

O love, my love, the night
Ushers her starry host into the sky,
And all the world doth feel her stilly might,
But thou and I.

Our hearts too fervent beat
To note the poppy potency she brings
In cooling cup of numbing nectar, sweet
As lethean springs.

O patient stars above,
Impart to us your holy, tremulous calm.
We pray not to forget our fervent love
In dreamless balm;

But this our breathed prayer,
That ye will dull the point of yearning pain
With memories sweet, and hopes of bliss again,
Ye hosts of air.

O love, my love, the night
Ushers her starry host into the sky,
And all the world doth feel her stilly might,
But thou and I.

YOUR BIRTHDAY

This is the day, dear heart, when you were born:
A day of mid-September when the year
Still wears the garb of greenery, yet unshorn
The trees stand proudly crowned with summer cheer.

Summer has not departed, but the nights
Come with a silent chill, preluding frost:
Later and later dawns the morning light,
Sooner and sooner sunset's charms are lost.

Faintly the sun fights with the river mists,
Paler the pomp of noonday; everywhere
A boding sadness, for the season lists
To a feared footfall far on the darkling stair.

'Tis the old presage of the coming Cold,
Slowing the pulse of nature; soon, ah soon,
His icy fingers in the night shall hold
The dying flowers beneath the pitying moon.

Then comes the sweet, sad season of my birth,
The time of late October when the trees,
Knowing their doom, give back to the fostering earth
Her lavish gifts; for every wanton breeze

Flutters with flakes of glory, or one by one,
In a soft hush of solemn starlight, fall
The perfect paintings of the frost and sun,
No two alike but richly patterned all.

Dear heart, we own autumnal origin,
Appearing when the year was in decline;
We came when nature saddened, to begin
Life's vivid journey through the shade and shine.

No sad reflections follow, for if men
Have likened life to a sad journeying
From spring to autumn, ours is a journey, then,
Which leads through winter to the joyous spring.

OUR CHRISTMAS

The Yuletide has returned again, dear wife,
And finds us still in quiet, humble ways:
No great deeds done, no place in the world's praise —
Onlookers, hardly sharers in the strife.
Like wayside waifs, we hear the drum and fife,
And see the guns gleam and the banners blaze,

And stare a moment in a wistful daze ;
Then turn aside to the byways of our life.
Yet a dear difference marks this Christmastide,
A difference which softly to our hearts
Brings home the very meaning that the mild
Bethlehem mother knew when at her side
She found the first, best gift the Day imparts,
The world's sweet sovereign — a little Child.

SLEEP, DARLING, SLEEP

Sleep, darling, sleep while thy mother bends o'er thee,
Sleep, darling, sleep through the deepening gloom ;
Twilight hath kissed thee, and now to adore thee
Up from the silvered wave rises the moon.
Sleep, darling, sleep.

Sleep, darling, sleep ; gentle breezes come stealing
In through the casement with soft, rustling wings.
Fondling thy ringlets with cool touch, and healing
Thy warm, wearied brow in dim night's dewy springs.
Sleep, darling, sleep.

Sleep, darling, sleep ; dainty dream-birds are singing
Their songs of enchanted, far off, happy lands
Where fairy bells all in sweet concert are ringing,
And ripples are whispering on star-litten strands.
Sleep, darling, sleep.

A LULLABY

Slumber sweetly, baby mine,
Slumber through the gloaming;
Dreamland's boundless realms are thine,
For thy restful roaming —
Shadowed vales where all the trees
Whisper woodsy mysteries,
While the murmur of the breeze
Tells of far seas foaming.

Slumber sweetly, baby mine;
Birdling wings are furled,
Flowerets on the arbor vine
All are snug upcurled;
Stars alone, who sleep by day,
Gentle vigil keep alway
While soft shades the angels lay
O'er the wearied world.

Slumber sweetly, baby mine;
Soon the dawn's red warning
On thy baby brow will shine,
Night's dim glories scorning.
Sweet thy dreamy, smiling rest,
Lit by gleams from regions blest,
Sweet, by unseen hands caressed,
Slumbering till the morning.

IN FAIRYLAND

Sitting within her cab, her little head
Turning with eager glance from side to side,
Through wonderland my baby seems to ride,
By father followed, but by fairies led —
For oh, those wide, blue, dancing eyes are fed
With more than mortal dainties; sprites that hide
From dull, cold, grown-up gazing are descried,
With all their filmy, rainbow wings outspread.
And gazing with her at the flowers, the trees,
And listening to the sparrows' chirping choirs,
I half discern the magic world she sees,
And strain to catch the thrill of silver lyres —
Lo, where the sunflowers nodded in the breeze,
The fairies toss their glowing, globéd fires!

NEVERTHELESS

Something 's accomplished, but the vast undone
Affrights us as the dawning greets the day,
While in the hush we hear the hours say:
"What yesterday you sowed, to-morrow's sun
Will bring to fruitage; but no warning ray
Can ripen what you sowed not." With dismay
We find us fettered to our past by one

Unbroken chain whose links we forged for aye.
Depressed by mad neglect and thoughtless deeds
Of years whose ban we can not change to boon,
We shudder. But remorse more losses breeds.
Slept we the dawn away? We'll seize the noon!
Was the day spent in sowing worthless weeds?
We'll sow the good seed by the waning moon!

TWILIGHT

Her brow aflush with sunset's parting ray,
And tresses floating toward the first dim star,
Rides Twilight, pensive child of Night and Day,
Mounted upon her gray, soft-rolling car.

Goddess is she of sighs and fond regret,
Breathing the memories of happier years,
Whispering with patient lips her sad "Not yet,"
Casting her spell of mingled hopes and fears.

GONE

The curtain yet sways,
In the air is a faint perfume,
And a dying echo strays,
Strays back to the long, lone room;

A glimmer athwart the gloom,
On the dark a dim grey haze,
And a leaden cross of unutterable loss
The staggering shadows raise.

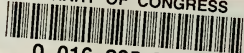
THE HARBOR CALL

Furl your sail, mariner, furl your sail;
No longer your stays are astrain in the gale.
Where the fierce ocean surges crashed over the prow,
The gay harbor ripples are frolicking now;
Furl your sail, mariner, furl your sail.

Furl your sail, mariner, furl your sail;
For the sharp-stinging sleet and loud-rattling hail
No longer are rife, and the sky-seeking mast
No more cowers low to the mad, howling blast;
Furl your sail, mariner, furl your sail.

Furl your sail, mariner, furl your sail.
Flowered fragrance outwafts from the blossoming
dale,
Far and faint the long boom of the harbor mouth
surf,
Right ahead the firm hills and the welcoming turf;
Furl your sail, mariner, furl your sail.

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